

WORLD STUDENT RELIEF

THE WORK OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SERVICE

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INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SERVICE dates from 1920, when European student relief was brought into being as an autonomous section of the World's Student Christian Federation to cope with the vast problems of student relief and rehabilitation in the university centres of Europe. In 1926, when the purely relief problem was less acute, and the need for a permanent organization on an international basis had come to be felt by many thousands of students, it was necessary to give European student relief a legal status in Swiss law. To this end International Student Service was formed, an autonomous body continuing the traditional work of student relief and cultural co-operation on a basis of entire impartiality in all matters of religion and politics, and thus encouraging the participation in the work of all men of goodwill, whatever their race, nationality or belief*.

In the period between the first and second world wars, International Student Service performed a two-fold function. It continued its various student relief activities and it also linked them to constant and searching inquiries into the real nature of a university and the place of the student in society. The problems of student self-help and co-operation were discussed at various international study conferences, and documents were collected concerning methods of selection of gifted students, student loan-funds, health services, hostel administration, and the place of foreign guest students in the national universities. It became a department of university research, which benefited from grants from the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Carnegie Endowment for Peace, published a series of studies on the trends of higher education in the various countries and inquired into the problems of academic overcrowding and unemployment in the learned professions, and academic freedom. Official recognition of the pioneer work of International Student Service in this field was given when the League's Committee on Intellectual Co-operation adopted the survey as a basis for its own work (Walter M. Kotschnig, "Unemployment in the Learned Professions", Oxford University Press, 1937).

In 1939 the coming need for renewed large-scale relief was evident. The World's Student Christian Federation and Pax Romana approached International Student Service, and an agreement was drawn up which, while leaving all three organizations in existence, founded a new organization in which they were combined. For this new organization the old name of European Student Relief was revived, and offices in Geneva were staffed by men and women who had worked for years with International Student Service, knew the various countries, and had the confidence of university people everywhere. Since the outbreak of the present War, student relief work has fallen into three main categories: student prisoners-of-war of all nationalities, student refugees and internees, and those students, particularly in Greece and Belgium, suffering from the extremes of malnutrition. So far as the much-needed relief work on the Continent is concerned, the British Committee

of International Student Service works largely through its international headquarters in Geneva and is financially dependent on the support it receives from university men and women, graduate and undergraduate alike.

The past twelve months have seen a further aggravation of the university crisis in Europe, as well as in other parts of the world. Everywhere the impact of war has increasingly marked academic life, the very continuity of which is and will be threatened during the coming months.

In the occupied countries of Europe the struggle of the universities has reached its climax following the measures taken early in 1943 by the German authorities for the total mobilization of all manpower available on the Continent. These measures have not spared the students. In Belgium, in Holland, in Norway, labour service has been declared compulsory for them, those refusing to register being excluded from the university. In Holland things have gone a step further: following several incidents for which student groups were held responsible, each student was required to sign a declaration by which he pledged himself to undertake no action directed against the occupying power. Here, too, those refusing to sign were excluded from higher learning. In France, the entire younger university generation has been mobilized for work in Germany, this measure being carried out by the French Government itself. Events in Norway are too vivid and recent to need further comment.

In all these countries, which have furthermore been afflicted by hard material privations, the students have made a brave stand. Few have yielded without resistance. In many universities strikes and other manifestations have taken place, expressing the opposition against the measures which have been imposed. Hundreds of students have even preferred to abandon their universities, to hide in their own country, or even fly abroad, with all the risks entailed, rather than be engaged against their will in the war machinery.

In belligerent countries also the situation of the universities has deteriorated during recent months. Not only has the number of students been drastically reduced, following mobilization from the age of eighteen or even seventeen; not only have many courses been shortened, with the object of adapting the curriculum to the war emergency; but also the very existence of the universities, as independent institutions devoted to the search for truth, has been questioned in some official quarters. In both belligerent parties voices have been heard which expressed the wish that for the duration of the War the universities should limit their aim to providing the State with an adequate number of technicians and young scientific workers required for the conduct of the War. Fortunately, however, this attitude has not been generally accepted, and leading university people have expressed themselves against a tendency which has found an expression in the emphasis laid everywhere on courses in natural and technical sciences as against arts and law. But the fundamental trend remains, and it is certain that, while the War will progressively drain all resources and energies in the belligerent countries, it will reduce the area in which cultural life will be able to develop with the freedom required.

While the universities in belligerent, as well as in occupied, countries have lost the greatest part of the younger generation who, in normal circumstances,

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would have filled their class-rooms, the number has increased again of the students who, cut off from their Alma Mater and forced for one reason or another to interrupt the course of their higher education, have faced alone and prematurely the gruesome hardships of the world at war; student refugees, for whom the summer months of 1943 brought new agony and who in hundreds had to fly from countries where they were threatened with arrest and deportation; students under the occupation, constantly in danger and weakened by months of nervous strain; student prisoners worn out by more than three years behind barbed wire; thousands and thousands of young men and girls who, in soul and body, have desperately suffered during the past year as a consequence of the present tragedy.

This development in Europe could not be watched passively by the European Student Relief Fund without an attempt being made to expand the work to some, at least, of the areas where the need was deepest and where, up to this date, conditions have prevented the organization of student relief.

Educational help to war prisoners and individual relief to internees or refugees in countries such as Switzerland and southern France—still under Vichy rule—was no more enough. Hunger was the major problem of thousands of students in occupied countries; an attempt to help them had to be made.

The delicate questions of principle connected with this broadening of the European Student Relief Fund programme were discussed by its executive on a concrete issue when, in the spring of 1942, an appeal was received through the International Red Cross for the students in Greece. At first the members of the executive felt uncertain whether a positive reply should be given to this call. The fear was expressed that the fact of the European Student Relief Fund engaging in a food relief scheme, in an occupied country, would create difficulties for its Anglo-Saxon friends, and perhaps make it impossible for them to obtain any longer the licences required for transmitting their funds to Geneva. However, after a full discussion, the executive finally agreed that the European Student Relief Fund should be ready to take its share in relieving the material needs of the student, as well as the intellectual ones. In order to prevent this decision from creating any difficulty for the committees in Allied countries, the following lines of policy were adopted:

(a) For all questions concerning relief in Greece, the European Student Relief Fund would use the channel of the Joint Relief Commission of the International Red Cross, the agency recognized by all Governments for the administration of relief in occupied countries, and which can guarantee, through its delegates on the spot, the rapid and impartial distribution of the resources made available.

(b) For the financing of food relief projects, only funds raised in neutral countries such as Switzerland, Sweden or Portugal, would be used, the resources received from the Anglo-Saxon countries being restricted to the financing of the work among prisoners of war, and in unoccupied countries. At the same time, the Committees in England and the United States should be invited to take part in the expanded programme in so far as they would be able to obtain, through the suitable agencies, the transfer licences required.

Along these lines the European Student Relief Fund has developed, since the summer of 1942, an increasing activity among students in Greece and other countries affected by famine. In some instances, even the Committees in Anglo-Saxon countries have

been able to make special contributions for these projects. Thus the decision taken was justified by events.

Adapting itself to the aggravated situation, the European Student Relief Fund pushed ahead energetically with an enlarged programme. Fighting against hunger and despair became the slogan under which Geneva faced its increased responsibility through the fourth year of the War.

The plight of the student groups with which the Fund is related in Europe has been equalled in other parts of the world. There are the students of the U.S.S.R., whose country has been invaded, whose institutions of higher learning have been destroyed (see *NATURE* of January 8, p. 49). Under the pressure of the invading forces, they have had to withdraw into the depths of their immense country. There, in the central provinces of the U.S.S.R., universities and schools have resumed their work. But conditions are precarious; the students have, in many cases, lost all their belongings; they are cut off from their families; they lack the primary necessities of life. Their need is great.

This development can be compared to the striking events which, since 1937, have taken place in China. Here, too, many universities which were situated in the coastal areas have been transferred to the interior, in regions scarcely touched by civilization. The Chinese Government and the university communities concerned, through the efforts of which this transfer has been rendered possible, have thus given splendid evidence of their faith in the value of higher learning as the foundation of a national culture. Through the six years of their gallant struggle, the Chinese students have been greatly encouraged by the uninterrupted help which they have received through the agency of International Student Service and the World Student Service Fund in New York. This help has been continued during recent months, and the students of China have become increasingly aware of the fact that their fight is the fight of all students in the world, united by a common creed of the value of truth, objectively searched for and passionately desired.

Thus the trend already visible last year towards the unification of relief efforts in the various parts of the world has been reinforced. It is no longer possible to draw a strict line between the activities in and outside the realm of the European Student Relief Fund competence. The continental frame set up three years ago has been broken by the reality of war. There is one single world conflict. Only a united world relief administration will be able to cope adequately with the needs arising everywhere.

World Student Relief is now formally constituted. Its work will be conducted in the same spirit as that of the European Student Relief Fund, and its administration will likewise be entrusted to International Student Service. The headquarters of World Student Relief will be in Geneva, where the main executive, on which the member organizations will be adequately represented, will meet. In Europe the work will be continued under the auspices of the European Student Relief Fund. Two affiliated Committees are in process of formation: the first, in New York, which will be competent to handle relief problems on the American continent, in the Far East, and provisionally in the U.S.S.R., with which contact is impossible from Geneva; the second, in London, with the special responsibilities of organizing relief within the British Commonwealth, and of

co-operating with the New York Committee in the conduct of the Chinese action.

This arrangement should enable the groups concerned with student work to cover efficiently all five continents, provision being made for ensuring the continued development of relief activities in case one of the regional centres should be paralysed following an unexpected turn in the War. Thus, an organization now exists which is well equipped for serving the cause of student solidarity, in the East as in the West, during and after the War.

NATIONAL FLOUR AND BREAD

FOURTH REPORT

From the Scientific Adviser's Division,
Ministry of Food

THE present report is a continuation of the work described in the previous three reports¹ on flour and bread in Britain, and deals with 440 samples of breadmaking flour and 1,408 loaves received in the period May 8–December 31, 1943.

Quality of Flour

The quality of British-grown wheat used in the grist depends upon the stock position, but it is now generally high, as the following table shows. For the bulk of the year 10 per cent of diluents (mainly barley, but also rye and oats) were also added.

BREADMAKING GRISTS IN ENGLAND AND WALES

Period	Home Grown Wheat (min. proportions)	Diluents (fixed proportion)	Imported White Flour (fixed proportion)
From 1. 1.43	35–45 per cent	5 per cent	5 per cent
25. 1.43	35–45	10	5
7. 2.43	35–45	10	5
19. 4.43	40–45	10	5
14. 6.43	30–40	10	5
21. 6.43	20–30	10	5
28. 6.43	20	10	5
6. 7.43	Optional, according to supplies available	10	5
23. 8.43	Some areas 25 per cent. Others optional	10	5
30. 8.43	20–35	10	5
13. 9.43	30–40	10	5
27. 9.43	45–50	10	5
4. 10.43	50	10	From 24.10.43:7½
22.11.43	52½	7½	7½
6.12.43	55	5	From 12.12.43:10
20.12.43	57½	2½	10

In the earlier months of the year, most of the flour used in Great Britain was enriched with calcium carbonate at the rate of 7 oz. per sack of 280 lb. (0.16 per cent), and, in fact, by August 1, all the mills in the country had the necessary equipment to make this addition, which is now general.

Fibre and Vitamin B₁. The following table shows the different levels over the 440 samples. A correction has been made in the fibre figures to allow for the small percentage of added Canadian G.R. flour (white flour fortified with vitamin B₁ to about the same level of National flour).

The 'national average' figures for fibre and vitamin B₁ in the period under review were 0.55 per cent and 1.0 I.U./gm., or practically identical with the figures for the previous period, October–May 8, 1943 (cf. Third Report).

Protein Content. This depends on the percentages

Fibre		Vitamin B ₁	
Value (per cent)	Samples (per cent)	I.U./gm.	Samples (per cent)
0.4 and less	4.6	1.20 and more	2.3
0.4 " "	31.6	1.10 " "	10.7
0.55 " "	52.6	1.05 " "	22.0
0.6 " "	67.0	1.00 " "	49.0
0.7 " "	87.2	0.90 " "	83.5
0.8 " "	94.7	0.80 " "	98.0
0.9 " "	97.2		

of Manitoba and English wheats, for which the average protein contents are about 14.0 and 9.4 per cent respectively. The protein contents of the samples received during each of the five months August–December averaged 12.25, 12.1, 11.1, 11.1 and 11.0 respectively.

Granularity. The size of the bran particles continues to diminish, and 420 samples examined (after correcting for the added white flour) gave the following results:

Total over 5 silk
(aperture 0.27 mm.)
1.5 per cent

Total over 8 silk
(aperture 0.19 mm.)
5.4 per cent

Calcium Carbonate Content. One half-pound sample of flour from each mill is examined weekly to test the uniformity of the calcium carbonate additions^{2,3}. The following table shows the results of these analyses for the month of November:

Calcium carbonate (oz./sack)	Corresponding capacity of mills (sacks/hour)	Percentage of total sack capacity examined
4.5 and less	238	4.4
4.6–5.5	448	8.1
5.6–6.4	1,156	20.9
6.5–7.5	2,599	47.0
7.6–8.5	745	13.5
8.6–9.5	290	5.2
9.6 and over	56	1.0

No. of samples tested = 1,310.

The calcium carbonate for the flour as a whole will be 7 oz. almost exactly; but there will be slight departures from this figure up and down the sack, depending upon the accuracy of feeding the calcium carbonate. Creta preparata is one of the most difficult products to feed because of its poor flowing properties, and the above table illustrates the range of variation due to this cause.

Quality of Bread

The following is a summary of the 1,408 loaves examined:

Quality	No. of loaves	Percentage
Good	297	21
Fair-Good	418	30
Fair	477	34
Poor	216	15

The lower general level of quality is due mainly to the high percentage of English wheat and the presence of diluent grains with grist. At the same time, it is of interest to note that all samples of flour received for analysis are also tested for baking quality under standard conditions. The 440 samples of flour gave the following results:

Quality	No. of loaves	Percentage
Good	194	44
Fair-Good	115	26
Fair	100	23
Poor	31	7

The above results show that approximately 70 per cent of the loaves baked in the laboratory were